

Barrows (E.P.)

The Harmony of Creation

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

OF THE

WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE.

Cleveland, February 21, 1847.

BY REV. ELIJAH P. BARROWS.

HUDSON.

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The Harmony of Creation:
And the subordination of the Physical part of it to the
Moral.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TRUSTEES, FACULTY, AND STUDENTS

OF THE

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

OF THE

WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE.

Cleveland, February 24, 1847.

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ADDRESS.

If one were asked to name that principle which, more prominently than any other, pervades the universe of created beings material and immaterial, interpenetrating, so to speak, each of its parts, considered separately, and the parts themselves, considered as making up one whole; he would answer, if he viewed the whole in the relation of its parts to each other, *harmony*; if he viewed the parts as constituting a whole, *unity*—harmony and unity with reference to a high moral end. The grand proof from natural religion of the unity of God is the unity of the creation. It is not an aggregate of individuals, thrown together, like the sand on the sea-shore, without order or design, and having no other relation to each other but that of juxtaposition, so that any part might be taken away at pleasure without detriment to the rest; but an organization, through every part of which, from the insect that hums by us on a summer's day to the highest order of hierarchies before the throne of God, the same all-pervading mind manifests itself. As the different members of the human body, though many, are so woven and compacted together as to make one whole, and the soul and body, though entirely different in their nature, are so adapted each to the other, as to make but one man; thus also the different parts of the universe, material and immaterial, are, by means of innumerable relations and adaptations, compacted into one perfect system, from which no single part could be taken away without damage to all the rest. Even moral evil, the only real disorder which exists in the creation, is, in a most important sense, in harmony with it. For, although moral evil itself is not essential to the system, but is, so far as it is introduced, a dis-

turbing and distracting element, the liability to moral evil is essential to it, as a system the final end of which, out of God, is the development and discipline of the powers of free moral agents, who, in the process of this training, are necessarily entrusted, in a certain measure, with the keeping of their own destiny.

If we look for examples of this interlacing and interweaving of the different parts of God's works, they offer themselves on every side. The most common object serves as well to illustrate it, as the most curious and far-fetched.

Let us suppose that the thoughtful observer of nature has, in the course of a solitary walk, cast himself down in the shade of some majestic oak, and begins to muse with himself thus, concerning its origin, nature, and relations.

What is this mysterious principle which we call life? How has it, from a minute germ, developed this mighty oak? And how does each particular kind of life, with unerring certainty, clothe itself with its own particular kind of body? Life is a wondrous architect. It builds itself a house to live and work in. And it is a most fastidious architect. The life of each kind of plant and animal has its own form of habitation, differing in all its parts external and internal from that of every other species. This oak is unlike all the other trees of the forest, not only outwardly in the form of its limbs, and leaves and fruit, but also in its inward nature and properties.—It is throughout oak, and nothing but oak, and it propagates only its own kind. Here we see that, in this oak, our student of nature has recognized the highest and most general law of organized beings, that each species of life shall have its own peculiar laws of development, and shall propagate only its own kind. Thus this particular tree is seen to be included in the operation of a general law of the organized creation; and, by being thus included, it appears no longer as an isolated being, but as a part of the entire system.

But he proceeds in his inquiries—What is this relation which the oak before me has to the elements of light and heat? How is it that, upon the return of spring, it awakes from its torpidity, and puts forth buds and leaves, and again, upon the approach of winter, goes into a state of inaction? Here is an adaptation as manifest as in the relation of the parts of a machine to each other. The nature of the tree has reference

to the nature of light and heat, and these again to its nature. He has now recognized a second general law of organized nature—its dependence for the development of its forms on the element of heat, and, to a great extent, of light also; and, in this law, he sees a new link connecting this particular tree with the general system.

Next he looks at the relation of the tree to the nutritive substances that surround it. The wide-spreading roots of the oak, while they serve to anchor it firm in the earth, are also endowed with the power of extracting nutriment from the soil in which they have buried themselves, while the leaves perform the double office of absorbing that which the plant needs for its nourishment, and exhaling that which is superfluous. Here is another most evident adaptation. The alimentary substances by which the tree is surrounded were useless, unless it possessed the power of appropriating them to itself, and this power were useless, if the substances themselves were wanting. He has now developed another general law to which all living beings are subject—their dependence for nourishment upon bodies foreign to themselves, and the consequent incessant change that is going on in the particles of which they are composed.

And, if he lifts his eyes upward, and contemplates the magnificent canopy of green beneath which he is reclining, how many reflections will crowd upon him! He will think of that wise arrangement by which the tree is enabled, upon the approach of winter, to cast off its leaves—its lungs—when they can no longer be used with safety or profit, and thus to go into a state of hybernation; and here he will discern a special law having reference to the change of the seasons, and thus connecting the fall of the leaves in Autumn with the motion of the earth round the sun, and the inclination of her axis to the plane of her orbit.

He will inquire, further—Whence that change of hue which the frosts of Autumn produce in the leaves of this tree and of the other trees of the forest, making them most glorious to view as they are about taking their flight? This will lead him directly into the contemplation of the entire theory of colors, and their dependence upon the chemical constitution of bodies. Thus may he proceed adding link after link to the ties which bind this particular tree to the general system.

Or, should his reflections take a different turn, he may inquire, What is the end of this oak as a work of God? Physiologically considered, its end is to propagate itself. As a mere plant, it has ful-

filled its destiny when it has borne acorns, endowed with the power of producing new oaks. But, economically considered, its end is to benefit man and beast. Here, again, he sees a wonderful harmony between these two ends. Considered in a physiological point of view, its mighty trunk and wide spreading limbs serve for the development of its leaves, and the whole together, for the growth of its fruit. But, while they accomplish this end, they also accomplish other economical ends. The bark which, in its physiological office, sheaths the trunk and limbs and protects the sap in its descent, how useful to man! Of its trunk, beams and planks, and boards are manufactured; its limbs, in their separation from the trunk, furnish knees for ships, its leaves a grateful shade, and its fruit sustenance to many animals. In this oak, then, he sees that harmonious blending together of the physical and economical, which pervades the whole material creation, and stamps it as the product of one mind. He sees that, in its relations to the whole system, the oak, and with it the whole vegetable kingdom, was made to subserve the wants of the animal kingdom which is above it in the scale of worth; and, since man is the head of the animal kingdom, that it was made to minister to his wants; and since, moreover, man's animal nature is subservient to his higher spiritual nature—a truth which will be considered more at large hereafter—he arrives at last at this conclusion, that the final end of the oak, in the system to which it belongs, is to minister to the wants of man, considered as a rational accountable subject of the moral government of God.

But not to insist longer upon this illustration, though we have by no means exhausted it, let us turn our thoughts to another which derives peculiar appropriateness from the circumstances of the present occasion. Let us look at man in his whole nature, rational and spiritual, and in his relations to the system in which he is placed. Here it is immaterial, except as a matter of convenience, where we begin; for the contemplation of any one part will, in the end, lead us up to his spiritual nature, and to the relations which, through that nature, he sustains to God, and to the other orders of moral beings with which revelation makes us acquainted.

Let us then begin with the bones. If we cast our eye on a human skeleton, we see at a glance that, although consisting of many parts, it is yet one. It is one system in which each member is adapted to all

the rest. But the skeleton, being not the whole, but only a part of the man, cannot explain itself. We see indeed that each of its bones is fitted to the rest, but we do not see why, of the innumerable forms and sizes, and textures, which it might have assumed, it has taken this particular form and size, and texture. The several bones, moreover, have various processes, and enlargements, and curvatures, and varieties of jointure, for which an explanation must be sought in the parts to which the skeleton itself stands related.

Proceeding next to the muscular apparatus, we find a new system superadded to the former, and the two so fitted to each other as to constitute one whole. The insertions of the muscles also explain many particulars with regard to the form of the bones, which were not understood before; but we have not yet arrived at the solution of the problem before us.

And when we add the fleshy integuments which cover the bones and muscles, and the external covering which encases the whole, a majestic and beautiful form rises to our view, which, considered as a mere piece of mechanism, is exquisitely perfect. The whole body is so interlaced and interpenetrated with muscles working in every direction, as to be brought completely under their control. And when we add those wonderful organs of communication between mind and matter—the nerves of motion—and see this curious piece of mechanism in actual operation, we are filled with admiration at the precision, the ease, the beauty, and the endless variety of its movements.

Still the problem with which we commenced, why the human body, considered as the work of a designing mind, has this upright and majestic form, rather than that of an ox, or a serpent, remains wholly unexplained, nor is there any thing in the entire range of physiology that sheds light upon it. It is the nature and destiny of the human soul that solves this problem. Socrates, the wisest of the heathen philosophers, understood this, when reasoning with an atheist, he said, "Is it not most manifest to you that, in comparison with other animals, men live as gods, having by nature the pre-eminence both in body and in soul. For neither if one had the body of an ox with the soul of a man, would he be able to accomplish his desires; nor are those animals which have hands but are destitute of reason, raised above their fellow brutes by the possession." And this too Milton saw, when in describing the

various classes of beings which met the eye of Satan upon his intrusion into Paradise,

—————"all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange,"

he said,

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honor clad,
In naked majesty seemed lords of all,"

But the nature of man, which constitutes him the natural lord of this world, cannot be considered apart from his moral nature, as a being endowed with reason, conscience, and free will, and subject to the control of a moral law, of which God is the author, and which he will enforce with appropriate rewards and penalties. Thus we arrive at the last and the highest relation of man, that which he holds to his Maker, as a moral being, which includes in itself and explains all his lower relations, and unites the whole in one sublime system of which God is the Head.

Hitherto we have restricted our view to the relations which the different parts of man have to each other, leaving out of account the innumerable connections which exist between him and the world in which he lives. Let us now go back and take a new survey of his constitution with reference to these connections.

To begin, then, once more, with the skeleton and muscular system; we find that these, in respect to massiveness and strength, are nicely proportioned to the weight of the human body, and the average resistance of the various obstacles which man, in providing for his wants, must overcome. Thus the size and strength of the bones and muscles on the one hand, and on the other, the magnitude and density of the earth (upon which depend the weight of all bodies) and the constitution of objects on its surface, are seen to hold a definite relation to each other, and to be adapted to each other as parts of one whole.

But we will look at some connections that are more immediate.

The alimentary apparatus of the human system, taking the term in its widest sense, occupies a most conspicuous place in man's thoughts, in man's labors, and in man's destiny.

The wants of the stomach bind him immediately and indissolubly, to the organic creation animal and vegetable whence he derives his

sustenance; and, since the organic and the inorganic are inseparable from each other, to the entire organization and products of the earth's surface. These again have a fixed relation to the distance of the earth from the sun, the quantity of light and heat which she receives from him, and to her daily and yearly revolutions; so that, through the medium of the alimentary system, man is linked in not only with the entire constitution and products of this globe, but also with the solar system to which it belongs.

On the wonderful adaptation of the stomach to the products of the earth I need not dwell. I will here only quote the words of a gentleman of your own profession. "Some physiologists," says he, "will have it that the stomach is a mill; others that it is a fermenting vat; others, again, that it is a stew-pan; but in my view of the matter it is neither a mill, a fermenting vat, nor a stew-pan—but a *stomach* gentlemen, a stomach."

The stomach, with the whole alimentary system, has laws of its own. It is above the laws of chemistry, and yet subject to them—above them in that it resists, within certain limits, their influence, and produces new and peculiar products of its own; subject to them, in that it cannot absolutely rise above them, as we see in the case of poisons and medicinal agents generally.

And here, did time permit, we could dwell on the special adaptations of the human stomach to man's higher nature, and to the infinitely diversified circumstances in which he is destined to live. We could speak also of the lungs which indissolubly connect the sanguineous system, and, by necessary consequence, the entire animal economy of man, with the constitution of the atmosphere; of the eye, which brings him into an immediate relation with the properties of light; of the ear, which also, in another way, connects him with the properties of the atmosphere, and of all the senses which are but so many links between man and the world in which he lives. Thus might we proceed without end, pointing out one after another of the innumerable ties which bind his physical nature to the material world around him, and the inseparable relations of these to his higher spiritual nature. But these details would be tedious and unnecessary.

Leaving them, therefore, let us consider some of the general relations which the material in man holds to the immaterial and moral.

That a spirit endowed with reason, conscience and free will, and thus apparently fitted in its nature to range at large through the works of God, should be imprisoned in a body of flesh and blood, by which it is made subject to the laws of matter, and limited and impeded in all its movements, has appeared to some to be an evil of the greatest magnitude, and they have compared the soul's release from the body to that of a prisoner from his cell, as if this event must necessarily be an introduction to liberty and happiness. We are by no means disposed to deny that the soul which has made a good use of the discipline to which it has been subjected in the body is, at death, elevated to a higher sphere of action and enjoyment.— But is it not evident that the discipline itself was needed to prepare it for this elevation? It may reasonably be questioned whether a finite being, like man, could at the commencement of his being, be safely entrusted with unrestrained liberty. He is made to live in a social system, and that under the authority of law. Of such a system obedience, self-denial and mutual dependence are the basis—obedience, because, without this, the law itself which binds together the whole system in harmony and happiness is annulled: self-denial, because no individual in the system can appropriate to himself all the natural good which it contains: mutual dependence, because, in a social system, no one can separate his particular interests from those of the whole.

Now what arrangement could be more admirably adapted to develop these virtues than the present, in which man, by means of the connection of his spiritual with a material nature, finds himself naturally placed under a stern necessity to obey, to deny himself, and to depend upon others? He begins his being in a state of helpless infancy. He is dependent upon the will of others for food, for clothing, for education, for life itself. Absolute submission, with no alternative, is proposed to him at the outset. Thus the hard but necessary lesson of obedience and dependence begins with the cradle; and it is not long before that of self-denial begins also. He soon learns that all the good things in this world are not his, and that such is the arrangement of things that the attempt to appropriate them to himself will subject him to pains and penalties innumerable both natural and positive. As his reasoning faculties

gradually unfold themselves he comes to understand that a cheerful spirit of obedience and self-denial, and dependence both upon the providence of God, and the kind services of his fellow men (for which he must in return give his kind services) is the only path to blessedness. And is not this a noble discipline—a discipline not for time alone, but also for eternity? Considered, then, with reference to the wants of the spirit, as a rational, accountable, immortal being, destined for a higher sphere of action, this union of the soul and body, which secures such a noble training, is not an evil but a good.

Again; we may state it as a general law of finite intelligences, that their capacities will never be fully developed unless they are compelled to exert themselves to the utmost. Now by the union of the spirit with a body of flesh and blood, God has placed man in such circumstances that he cannot remain idle. His constantly recurring wants assail him like a strong man armed, and compel him to put forth all his energy. In none of the departments of life is success obtained without unremitting toil.

The heaven-appointed price of eminence is labor—hard labor. It is true that the depravity of man so perverts this arrangement of Providence as to make it the occasion of much oppression and suffering. But the arrangement itself is wise and salutary, having, like every other arrangement which God has made in this world, ultimate regard to the good of man's spiritual nature. We have abundant evidence from the experience of the world in all ages, that no greater curse can befall the young than to be exempted from the necessity of labor, and that severe and long continued.

Once more: it has seemed strange to some that a being of such exalted powers as man should be subjected to contingency; that his success in life, and even the gift of life itself should be made to depend upon innumerable casualties which he can neither foresee nor guard against. But here also we shall find the providential government of God over this world in perfect harmony with the wants of man's spirit. It is a government uniting a wise combination of uniformity with contingency—a government of uniformity in the midst of contingency. It is conducted by general laws, which, remaining unaltered from age to age, furnish all necessary encouragement to human effort, and yet the results of these laws are, in

many important respects, made subject to contingency, that is, to combinations of circumstances so variable that they cannot be made matters of human calculation.

The revolutions of the seasons, for example, depend upon fixed laws. There are times for sowing and for reaping, and for ceasing from all agricultural pursuits. The husbandman who neglects the opportunities which these fixed laws bring and take away in succession, must come to remediless want. And yet with these invariable laws contingency is so combined that the results of his toil are uncertain. It is indeed certain that if he does not sow he will not reap. But, after he has done his utmost, many casualties remain. Excessive rains may sweep away his crops, drought may consume them, armies of insects devour them, or untimely frosts nip them in the bud. The same uncertainty holds true with regard to every worldly occupation, nay even with regard to life itself. Industry, temperance, and virtue all promote health and long life, but they are no guarantee against an untimely end. In spite of all human precaution, fatal diseases will assail the human frame, and ten thousand casualties, against which no human foresight can provide, stand ready at God's bidding to sever the golden cord of life.

In all this the atheist sees nothing but chance. In his view man is the sport of accident. He is nothing but a thistle-down driven before the tempest, only to find a lodgment in some crevice, or beneath some bush, there to perish forgotten and uncared for. But the christian discerns, in the subjection of all his earthly possessions to contingencies against which his foresight cannot provide, a wise arrangement of God for the cultivation of the higher part of his nature. In this arrangement he reads his duty, while he diligently uses the appointed means of success, to maintain, at the same time, a humble, prayerful, submissive and dependent spirit, and not to set his heart upon earthly treasures.

And so we might proceed, adding illustration to illustration, all showing that the material universe is one mighty system bound together by innumerable bands and ligatures, and the whole having for its final end the education and discipline of man for eternity.—Man, the immortal accountable free agent, is placed in the midst of a material system, and subjected to its power, but he is not of it. It

was made for him, not he for it. His very subjection to it evinces his pre-eminence above it. It is not the subjection of a slave to a master, but that of a son and heir to tutors and governors appointed to train him for the inheritance in reserve for him.

Thus we see that the great problem of the present constitution of the material creation finds its solution in man's spiritual nature, to the wants of which it is designed to minister. But man's spiritual nature is its own interpreter. It sheds light on the constitution of the whole inferior creation, but borrows no light from any source save from God its author; and he, in creating men intelligent free agents, and implanting in the very substance of their souls a sense of moral obligation and responsibility, has clearly indicated for what end they were made, and what destiny awaits them. If true to their nature, God, in giving them this nature, has pledged himself to raise them to the society of the heavenly hierarchies, for admission to which it qualifies them; but, if false, he has, by the same nature, forewarned them that their end shall be degradation and ruin.

Some of the practical lessons which this view of the harmony of creation, and its subserviency to man's moral nature teaches will now be considered.

I. Each particular department of truth derives new interest and value from the perception of its harmony and connection with the whole. It is indeed in the knowledge of this harmony and connection that our knowledge of any particular portion of truth mainly lies. He knows a piece of mechanism who knows it in its relations and ends. The professor of anatomy does not introduce his pupils to a full comprehension of the human heart by simply laying this organ on the table, and pointing out its size, and texture, and cavities and valves. All these it is necessary to know, but how much more than these. No man can understand the heart without understanding the arteries that proceed from it, and the veins which terminate in it. And these cannot be understood without understanding the structure and office of the lungs, and the constitution of the atmosphere and of the blood, and the functions of the entire alimentary system, and of the various secreting and excreting glands. In a word, no one can understand the heart without understanding the whole man, considered in his animal nature. The heart is to be

studied, not as an organ by itself, but as a part of the man. Its wonderful nature manifests itself in the office which it performs in the entire economy of the system.

The same principle applies to the whole range of truth. It is all interwoven into one body, so to speak, and each part is to be studied in its connections with the rest. It is understood when its relations are understood and not before. How often, in the history of science, has some fact, or class of facts, that had been well known for centuries, but had excited no interest, because it was regarded simply by itself, become all at once invested with new beauty and value, and been studied with intense interest, because its relations to other truths have been discovered! To draw an illustration from geology—the various strata which compose the earth's surface, with the vegetable and animal remains imbedded in them, were, at least to some extent, known for ages before the rise of the modern science of geology.—But because they were not considered in their bearing upon other great truths, they were viewed with indifference or idle curiosity.—But now, studied with reference to the great problem of the successive stages by which the earth's surface has been brought to its present organization, with what new interest and value are they invested!

Thus is it with all truth. Its true dignity and value is seen in the part which it plays in the general system. To him who has learned thus to investigate and judge of each particular department of truth, it appears invested with a loveliness and majesty of which the careless observer knows nothing. He feels a living interest in all truth because he sees (in some humble measure) the relations of each part to the whole system of which God is the Author and Head. And where he does not discern these relations, he does not, with the superficial narrow-minded materialist and atheist, sneeringly ask, "*What is the use of this?*" but he humbly waits for more light.

II. Another benefit of studying truth in its connections and relations, is that it shows us the high supremacy of the moral part of man's nature over the physical. For we have seen that, with whatever part of his material frame we begin, we come at last to this result, that it was intended to subserve the wants of his spirit. And the same we find to hold true of all the physical arrangements of this world, and of his very subjection to their power. Without

man, the world appears like a vast and complicated piece of mechanism, evidently intended to accomplish high results, but not yet directed towards those results. With man, the system is seen in full operation. Under its powerful influence the immortal soul is undergoing a process of severe but necessary discipline for a more perfect state of being.

When we consider how constantly men are, from the necessities of their condition, occupied with objects of sense, it will be manifest that the habit of thus viewing the material world in its subserviency to the moral, must exert the most salutary influence. And it would seem that this is especially necessary in the case of those whose profession naturally leads them to the contemplation of the material rather than the spiritual in man's nature. One whose immediate business is with the animal part of man, and who is constantly witnessing the immense power which this exerts over his mental faculties and moral feelings; who has often occasion to notice the connection between a disordered state of the stomach and an irritable temper; between a torpid liver and mental sluggishness and despondency; and, in general, between different constitutions of the body and their corresponding mental and moral temperaments; and who sees, moreover, that a blow on the head, or an effusion of blood on the brain has power to suspend, and various diseases to derange the operation of the mental faculties—one whose employment leads him thus to consider, from the material side only, the connection of mind and matter, might be in danger of hastily drawing the conclusion that the whole soul lies in the bodily organization, and that there is no purely spiritual and moral principle, connected indeed with the body in the present life, yet, so far as its essential attributes are concerned, above it, and independent of it.

This nascent feeling of materialism could be met only negatively on purely physiological grounds. Physiology would be able to furnish such analogies as the following.

The eye is to the soul the organ through which it takes cognizance of all visible objects. When this is destroyed the power of seeing perishes with it. But it would be a most absurd inference that, because the power of seeing is gone, the being which exercised this power has perished. The only rational conclusion is, that, while the mind itself has suffered no lesion in any of its essential attributes, it

has been deprived of one of the instruments through which it has heretofore held converse with the external world.

Again: in cases of drowning, the circulation of the blood is so suspended that all feeling and motion, and, so far as we can see, all mental activity cease. Upon the restoration of the circulation, supposing it possible to effect this, thought and feeling and motion return. It would be an unwarrantable supposition in this case, that the spiritual substance itself which thinks, and feels, and acts, has suffered any injury in its own proper essence. All that we can legitimately infer is that the body, the mind's appointed medium of action, has been temporarily brought into such a state that it could no longer act in it and through it.

If now we suppose that resuscitation cannot be effected, then the body is speedily disorganized, and the soul loses permanently the instrument through which, in life, it thought, and felt, and acted.—That the soul itself has perished, physiology affords no ground for believing; but neither, on the other hand, does it teach what other means it may have in a disembodied state of exercising its powers. Whether, when its connection with the body has entirely ceased, it may not, as a pure spirit, enjoy the highest activity, or whether it may not be left in a state of unconsciousness and inactivity—respecting these momentous questions physiology alone is able neither to affirm nor deny. All that it can say is that it has no evidence that the soul is annihilated with the disorganization of the body. Its testimony is only negative, and, as such, meets not the wants of the spirit in the hour of dissolution.

But the subordination of the whole material creation to man's spiritual nature, according to the view which we have taken, sheds positive light upon this great question—light which is not to be despised or undervalued because we enjoy the clearer and more authoritative teachings of revelation, but which, as it is in glorious harmony with these teachings, ought ever to be contemplated in connection with them. We have seen that all the parts of the material world find their end in ministering to man as a rational accountable subject of moral government; that while God has with his own finger written within upon the soul its responsibility to law, he has also, by means of the physical constitution which he has given to man's body

and to the world in which he has placed it, and the relations which he has established between these, commenced a process of moral training, which evidently has reference to the development of his powers as a free moral agent, and which, as it is continued up to the very hour of his departure from this world, manifestly has reference to the employment of these powers, when thus developed, in some future sphere of activity. We cannot believe that all this labor bestowed upon a mind capable of unlimited enlargement in all its faculties is for no high end. But it can find a worthy end only in the preparation of the soul for a future state of being. And here revelation comes in to confirm the conclusions of unbiased reason, and by a voice from the excellent glory, declares that man is made for immortality: that the present life is a seed-time of which eternity is the harvest; and warns him, in view of this solemn truth, to sow not to the flesh but to the spirit.

III. The habit of contemplating truth in its connections and relations tends powerfully to produce that child-like candor and humility which is the highest ornament of every scholar and professional man. How it accomplishes this is obvious. Instead of chaining the mind down to one narrow department of knowledge, it opens to it the whole field of truth in all its immensity, and, in contrast with this, compels it to see and acknowledge its own ignorance. By showing also the innumerable ties which bind together all the different departments of knowledge, it preserves the professional man, who must of necessity devote his main strength to his own particular branch of science, from that foolish vanity and ostentation which are at once the offspring and the index of a narrow and contracted mind. The only reason why men are ever vain of their acquirements is that the little world of truth in which they live and move is to them the whole world. Like the cottager's child, who has never been away from his father's premises, and who thinks that the narrow spot of ground which the blue circle of the horizon encompasses is the entire universe, so they, having never traveled beyond their own department, vainly imagine that in it are contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

It cannot have escaped your notice that men's vanity is generally inversely as the magnitude of their pursuits. A mountebank, a

rope-dancer, a horse-jockey, prides himself more on his powers than a Chatham or a Washington. The reason is that the more trivial the object of a man's pursuit, the more it narrows down the field of his vision: on the contrary, the higher and nobler an employment, the wider the scope of truth which it includes. It is one of the blessed effects of true learning, that, by opening to men's view, vast fields of research on every side, all bound together by indissoluble ties of fellowship, it teaches them how little they know, and how intimately that little is connected with other fields of knowledge yet to be explored, and thus removes far away from them the dogmatizing self-conceited spirit that marks the sciolist, as distinguished from the ripe scholar.

According to the testimony of your own writers, your profession, gentlemen, is not a little troubled by the intrusion of ignorant pretenders. Now the very essence of quackery—so far as it is not simply a money-making affair—lies in the narrow and contracted spirit that has been animadverted upon. Your regular quack has taken up one remedial agent, real or supposed, and in this he includes the whole healing art. His nostrum is (for the time being, for he may soon change it for something else) his world, and he is quite sure there is nothing lying outside of it. He can bring innumerable certificates, and these too signed by ministers of the gospel of high standing in their own profession (and of course—so he would seem to judge—capable of pronouncing, *ex cathedra*, on questions in an entirely different profession)—he can bring innumerable certificates to prove that his heal-all has power to clarify the human system from every species of disease, as certainly and as safely as an egg will clarify a cup of coffee. His error is precisely that which we have been considering. He takes one remedial agent real or pretended out of its proper place and relations, making it, instead of a remedy, to be used like other remedies, when the symptoms of the disease indicate its use, *the* remedy to which every other article of *materia medica* is, in all circumstances, to give place. Thus that which in its proper place and measure was truth, out of its place becomes pernicious falsehood. To constitute a man a quack it is not necessary that his nostrum should be absolutely worthless. On the contrary it may be, in its place, very valuable. Hydropathy, for example, has its place

among remedial agents, and no enlightened person would accuse a physician of quackery on the simple ground that he resorted to this remedy. But, when we see an hydropathist ready to swoon away at the mention of calomel, opium, or quinia, we discover that narrow and exclusive mode of judging which is the very essence of empiricism. One of the chief advantages of a thorough and comprehensive course of medical training, such as we are proud to say this medical school furnishes, is that it does away with these contracted ideas, and teaches the physician to give to every article of *materia medica*, and to every mode of medical treatment its proper place.

I am unwilling to dismiss this subject, without alluding to another species of empiricism which may properly be called *moral*. I have reference to that materialistic philosophy, unhappily too prevalent at the present day, which, without directly denying the eternal and immutable obligation of moral law, virtually undermines it, by teaching that man is the passive creature of circumstances. According to the doctrine of this school, all crime has its source in a bad organization of the brain, or in inpropitious outward circumstances. The offender against law human or divine is not guilty, but unfortunate. He has only acted in conformity with influences which impelled him forward by a physical necessity, just as the tiger is impelled to blood and carnage. It is wrong, therefore, to inflict upon him retributive suffering, as an expression of the demerit of his deeds: the idea of demerit, and of penalty as expressive of demerit, is a pernicious prejudice which ought to be got rid of as soon as possible; all punishment has for its only end the good of the offender; it is not to be regarded as an infliction of merited suffering for violated law; but as a medicine, bitter indeed, but salutary, and intended for the restoration of the patient: the infliction of capital punishment is utterly wrong, and the idea of an eternal retribution hereafter a fable.

Such is a brief summary of the code of this sensuous philosophy. It is, very generally found associated with phrenology; yet phrenology, kept within its proper province, does not lead to such conclusions.— Here let me say that with phrenology itself, as a science resting upon deductions from alleged facts, I have at present no concern. Whether it be, in its leading principles, true or false, is immaterial to the present question. We find, as a matter of fact, the greatest diver-

sity in the relative strength of men's passions and propensities, just as we find also the greatest diversity in their external circumstances. Some men have, whether by the original constitution of their minds, or by education and the force of circumstances, or by such a difference of bodily organization as phrenology affirms, stronger animal passions (very often stronger propensities in some particular direction) or more pride and ambition, or more impetuosity, or more courage and resolution, than others. And these diversities of temperament and character, however we may account for them, undoubtedly vary indefinitely the kind and degree of temptation which different men must overcome in order to adhere to rectitude.

But it is a first principle in morals that, so long as a man retains the exercise of his reason by which he discerns the distinctions between right and wrong, no amount of temptation can constitute a valid excuse for sin. The obligation of right is supreme and absolute. It does not admit of being gauged and measured, and weighed with the pleasures of sin. The moment we admit that a low degree of temptation does not excuse the violation of known right, but a high degree does excuse it, we have undermined the whole foundation of morals. Who then is to decide how much or how little the degree of temptation shall be? It must be left to each man, under the excitement of passion, to decide for himself. There is no longer any absolute immutable standard of morality. Law is made subordinate to passion, and there is an end to all personal virtue and social order.

Let it be remembered, further, that the obligation to obey moral law does not depend in the least upon the acuteness or bluntness of our moral feelings. We know that the habit of obeying the dictates of conscience cherishes the moral feelings, and makes them more tender and susceptible; and that the habit of disobeying the voice of conscience stifles and blunts these feelings, so that the hardened offender can perpetrate with comparative indifference deeds which, at the commencement of his career of crime, would have filled him with horror. But if this callousness of moral feeling excuses or even palliates his crimes, we come directly to the monstrous conclusion that one by steeping his conscience in crime, until he has stupified it, makes himself at last an innocent man! And some pretended philan-

thropists of the present day, are, it would seem, acting upon this principle. For there is no surer way to enlist their sympathies and efforts for a criminal and against the laws, than that he should have perpetrated some high-handed deed of lust or blood which evinces the greatest obtuseness of moral feeling.

This materialistic philosophy, which virtually annihilates the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, and resolves all crime into misfortune, by making it simply the product of unpropitious circumstances or an unhappy natural temperament, has again and again reared its snaky head in this world, hissing defiance at God, and right, and law, and heaven and hell; willing to reduce man to a level with the brutes, by making him a creature of mere impulse, if so it might also deliver him from moral responsibility; and its prevalence has ever been the signal for the most open and shameless profligacy of morals. I need not say, gentlemen, how much the success or defeat of this mischievous philosophy will depend upon your attitude and bearing towards it. The community confidently expect in you powerful defenders of the cause of law and morals, at the present crisis when so much is said and written to undermine both.

In the department of medical jurisprudence an arduous and responsible office will be, from time to time, devolved upon you. It will be yours, on the one hand, to protect the really insane from undeserved suffering, and, on the other, to maintain unsullied the sanctity of law. You will need to plant your feet firmly on the basis of the immutable and eternal obligation of right, and to maintain with no faltering accents, the principle that, so long as the reason discerns the distinction between right and wrong, no amount of excited passion can constitute a valid excuse for criminal deeds.

GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATING CLASS—

You go out with our best wishes for your welfare. We rejoice in the testimony we have before us this day both of the continued and increasing prosperity of this Medical School, and of your proficiency in medical science, which is such as to warrant in us the most sanguine hopes that you will become bright ornaments to your profession.

Remember, young gentlemen, that you are entering upon the duties

of a profession that once received the highest honor from him who was himself above all human praise. When the Savior tabernacled in the flesh, almost all his miracles were wrought upon the persons of the sick. He performed no mighty work for mere ostentation and effect, but, wherever he saw suffering humanity, he hastened to its relief. Methinks it must be to you a delightful and inspiring thought that you are endeavoring, in a humble manner, to imitate his example in relieving the sorrows to which flesh is heir. Suffer me to remind you that, wherever you meet with the poor, who need your assistance, you should, like him, give your services freely, expecting no earthly recompense: and though you are not called upon, as he was, to make spiritual instruction your proper employment, yet, like him, you ought ever to consider and treat man's spiritual nature as of paramount importance and excellence; and, while you are ministering to the wants of the body, to omit no opportunity which the providence of God opens to you of doing good also to the immortal spirit.







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